



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

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OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

November 23, 2015

Jeff DeFreest, District Ranger
Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District
3031 Tongass Avenue
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Dear Mr. DeFreest:

We have reviewed the above-referenced Final EIS (CEQ #20150293) and Record of Decision for the Saddle Lakes Timber Sale proposed for Revillagigedo Island in Southeast Alaska (EPA Project #12-0023-AFS). Our review was conducted in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

In our October 24, 2014 letter on the Draft EIS, we commented on the Forest Service's tentative identification of Alternative 4 (harvest of 51 million board feet from 2,875 acres) as its preferred alternative. We commented that Alternative 4 appeared to be a balanced approach to providing benefits to the local economy, while having a level of adverse impacts to most resources comparable to the alternatives impacting fewer old growth acres. We also recognized the succinct analysis, detailed alternatives maps, index and acronym list inside the front cover of the Draft EIS, all which are helpful to the reviewer. We requested that the Forest Service continue to work to achieve further reductions in potential impacts to visual resources, deer habitat (and subsequent impacts to subsistence), as well as impacts to water quality from new and temporary road miles. We assigned a rating of "LO" (Lack of Objections) to the Draft EIS.

The Final EIS and ROD identify Alternative 5, with modifications, as the Forest Service's selected alternative. Alternative 5 makes available 47 million board feet of sawlog and utility timber from 2,327 acres on Revillagigedo Island. Harvest will require construction of up to 17.2 miles of new road, reconditioning of 10.5 miles of road, and construction of 9.8 miles of temporary road. In order to proceed with this proposal, the visual priority route and use area designations must be amended for the Saddle Lakes project area.

We believe that the selection of Alternative 5 further reduces impacts by minimizing the miles of road and acreage associated with this project. We are also pleased with the monitoring program that has been identified to evaluate impacts from road construction and use to water bodies in the project area. Due to further improvements to the proposed project, we continue to have no objections to the proposed project and commend the Forest Service for further minimizing adverse impacts with the selection of Alternative 5.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Final EIS and ROD. Please contact Jennifer Curtis of my staff in Anchorage at (907) 271-6324 or curtis.jennifer@epa.gov with any questions you have regarding our comments.

Sincerely,



Christine B. Littleton, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit